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ABSTRACT

This booklet describes specific ways that parents can help their preschool children learn during the routines of a typical day. It provides general guidelines on safety, child development, and parental expectations, as well as learning activities that can be used when children are waking up, dressing, getting ready for preschool, playing alone, playing with other children, playing outside, doing chores, eating meals at home, interacting with visitors at home, bathing, toilet training, getting ready for bed, traveling in the car, shopping, and participating in activities in a community setting (such as libraries, parks, and restaurants). The booklet also discusses learning activities and situations in regard to discipline, vacations, and holidays, along with the stages of early childhood development. It explains how many common household items can be used to help young children learn. A list of national and State of Ohio resource agencies and organizations for parents is included. (MDM)

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Our Special World

ED 409 085

Parents and Preschoolers
Living, Learning and Playing Together

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State of Ohio
Department of Education

John M. Goff
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Early Childhood Education
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August, 1996

Dear Parents:

You are your child's first and foremost teacher. The home experiences during a child's early years of life become the foundation for future learnings. The Ohio Department of Education, in recognition of these important years, is pleased to announce the availability of an activities handbook designed especially for parents.

This handbook entitled Our Special World, Parents and Preschoolers, Living, Learning and Playing Together was written by parents for parents in cooperation with the Division of Early Childhood Education and personnel from the Southeastern Ohio Special Education Regional Resource Center.

It is our hope that you find this handbook a valuable resource in your parental journey as you prepare your children for their educational experiences.

Sincerely,

Jane Wiechel

Jane M. Wiechel, Director
Division of Early Childhood Education

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Introduction

We know that one of the most signficant influences on a child's growth and development is how we, as parents, relate to our children. We realize all families are very busy and have many demands on their time. Rather than suggesting activities that require you to set aside times during the day to "teach" your child new skills, this booklet is designed to give you ideas that you can fold into the routines of everyday life. By supporting, encouraging and responding to our children during these routines, learning can take place which is fun and enjoyable.

Through typical daily routines, we can encourage and respond to our child's abilities by giving them opportunities to see, hear, touch, taste and feel objects in their home enviroment. Daily interaction with people at home and in the community helps our children develop positive social and communication skills. By watching, listening and imitating what others are doing, our children learn how to relate to objects and people. When we encourage and participate in the regular play and social activities of our child, we are supporting their growth, independence, abilities, security and happiness (as well as their development.)

It is our hope that the ideas included in this book will be as helpful to you as they have been to us. Not every idea will work with your child. We encourage you to try different activities, add your own ideas and have fun coming up with those things that work best for you, your child and your family.

Parent Authors

- Teresa Atkinson
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Reflections

A Day in the Life of . . .

Much of our day, in fact our lives, is determined by Kirk. For example, Kirk does not sleep in at all, so there is no sleeping in for us. If Kirk is up, we must get up. One expects this to a certain period of time from a child, but Kirk is 10 years old and there is no end in sight.

Kirk is curious, creative, determined and large. We've learned the hard way what damage Kirk can do to our home and possessions - with no mal-intent on his part - when he is allowed to roam unattended. (Imagine what a two year old can do and multiply it by five.) Many people don't realize that this continues at this age. Others, if they knew, would consider us smothering parents who won't allow their child to gain autonomy, but they haven't had to live with the consequences.

A Walk in the Park

We have to plan family outings according to Kirk. Will he be able to handle this? What do we need to do to prepare for it? If things don't go well, what's plan B?

Nothing is easy. You might think a movie would be easy. Kirk loves movies. Except. . . Kirk doesn't tolerate some sounds well, he doesn't like crowds and he's not at all fond of the dark. (Not to mention that he can't hold still for long sometimes.) We have to be prepared to pay admission for all of us and be aware that some or all of us may not see a thing.

Going out to dinner? Sounds nice . Except... there can't be a line and there must be fast service. Be prepared for an argument from him if you drive up to a restaurant, discover a line and drive on to look for another. They have to have things he'll eat, but you can't let him eat too much or he'll throw-up. And you can forget a cup of coffee or a brief chat after Kirk is done eating. You're lucky to have the check by the time he's pushing to get out the door. And McDonald's with the play area. . . they won't let him play, so even that's out.

The Bottom Line

Whether it is a school activity, choosing insurance policies, seeking a job or looking for a car, children with special needs make it necessary for their parents to have to consider more variables than most other families. Others may or may not agree with their choices, but it's the parents who live with the consequences.

Parents may be so overwhelmed from dealing with day-to-day life that what may seem to be a simple request of time, may be too difficult to accommodate.

Parents and their children need to have fun, and even that requires a lot of effort for some of us.

Parents need time to be parents. They need time to be a spouse and they need time for themselves.

Parents need time for relationships with friends.

The Most Important Thing

When Hannah was first diagnosed, my husband and I were devastated. For a year we went to doctors, specialists and therapists. Test after test was done! We read books about her condition. We asked questions and more questions. We found no real answers. Finally, I was at the end of my rope. I did not feel I could go on. I was out ot hope and out of energy. One day my husband said, "We may never have answers to our questions, but she is our daughter and I am going to enjoy her!" That was so freeing! The pressure to have answers wasn't quite as heavy. The guilt of "Why is she like she is?" or "Was it something I did?", did not drive me to get to the bottom of things anymore. We could love and enjoy her for who she is, like we do the rest of our children.

This realization has not made our days any less busy, hectic or stressful. We still have good and "growing" days. We face new challenges as Hannah grows and changes. Life is not often "easy", but we do take time to enjoy each simple, small step of her accomplishments, the little breakthroughs and her smiles. We make time as a family - Hannah, her three brothers, Dad and me, Mom - to have fun together! It makes a big difference.

Creating a place where my child can learn and grow

This booklet describes specific ways we can help our children learn during the routines of a typical day.

There are several things to keep in mind, regardless of the time or place.

1. **Make sure your child is safe.** Avoid toys with small parts that can be swallowed. Cover electrical sockets. Keep things that are poisonious and breakable out of reach.

2. **Make sure your child is healthy.** Most children get colds, the flu and other common childhood diseases. Generally, eating foods that promote health, getting outside to play regularly and routine immunizations are the best ways of making sure our children have the energy and strength to learn and grow. Some children have medically-related conditions, such as seizures, which may effect their ability to learn. It is important to have a doctor who knows your child and your child's condition well. If your child needs to take prescription medication, make sure your child takes the right amount of medicine, at the right time, according to the doctor's instructions. Getting children to take medicine can be a challenge! Crushing pills and putting them in food is one creative way of making sure our children take the medicine they need. Keep in regular contact with your doctor to make sure that the medicine your child is taking is what your child needs.

3. **Help your child feel secure by having a regular routine.** Children who have an idea of what to expect don't have to spend time "guessing" what will happen to them next. When setting up a routine, include times throughout the day when your child is the one who decides what will happen. Having a "picture schedule" of things that happen during the day is one way children can learn the daily routines without always having to ask us what will happen next.

4. **Support your child's independence.** Have toys and things your child uses in a place that can be reached easily. Put things where they can be seen. If toys are on a shelf instead of a toy box, it is easier for your child to pick the toy they want to play with. When you put pictures on drawers and cabinets your child will learn where to find things or where things belong.

5. **Have a space where your child can "spread out"** or be active without getting "in the way." This is really important when they want to leave their "creation" until later.

6. **Take time to enjoy each other and have fun.** Each day is full of things that must be done such as getting dressed, eating, cleaning up, etc. If the only time we talk to our children is when we are telling them to do something, we miss many chances to encourage learning and have fun. Fun can happen throughout the day, not just when your child is playing with toys. It can happen during bathtime, mealtime or in the car. Imitate what your child is doing, describe what you see your child doing, sing songs while you are doing chores or turn a routine into a game.

7. **Encourage language development.** Gestures, facial expressions and words are ways that our children let us know what is going on with them. When our child uses gestures or facial expressions to give us a message, we can imitate and use our words to describe the message we think they are sending. When our child uses words that are hard for us to understand, we can repeat what we think they are trying to say. We can teach our children new words by saying the names of things we are using in our daily routine and describing what we are doing. We can increase our child's language by adding new words to what our child has said. For example: Craig says "truck" and you can say "You want the big truck." Children usually understand more than they can say, but if we want them to learn how to talk, we need to use language that matches our child's ability level.

8. **Encourage your child to stay with an activity longer.** The amount of time a child stays with an activity depends on their age, abilities and interests. We can support and expand their attention by showing an interest in what they are doing. One way to show interest is to imitate what your child is doing. When doing an activity together, take turns. Wait until your child has done something before you take your next turn. Describe what you see your child doing.

9 **Set realistic expectations.** Children learn more when they are practicing things they know how to do. Watch your child at play and during daily routines. Pay attention to what your child can do without your help and how they choose to spend their time. If you ask your child to do something and he does not respond right away, wait. It takes some children a little longer to figure out what it is that is expected of them. Children become confused when they do not have enough time to "figure things out" before we give them more information. Frustration, resistence and lack of interest are clues our children give us when we are asking or requiring too much of them. We can encourage learning best when we build upon the things our child can do and likes to do. Use the section Developmental Stages as a guide for setting realistic expectations.

10 **A Word about Praise:** Many times we hear how important it is to praise our children. Praise is one way we let our children know they are important and have value. It is even more important to be specific with our children about what they have done that pleases us. Instead of saying things like "good boy," say: "Thank you for putting your plate in the sink." Sometimes when we say "good boy" our children are not exactly sure what they have done that has made us happy. Another way we can "praise" our children is simply commenting on what they are doing. When children are playing together, we can say: "It looks like you are having fun making that garage." When we comment on what children are doing they learn that we pay attention to them when things are going well, not just when things are going badly.

Our Rights as Parents

We have the right to:

- set aside time for ourselves
- ask for help as often as we need it
- set "dates" with our spouses
- close the bathroom door and not be bothered
- call friends or family members just to blow off steam
- say "no" to others
- make decisions that family and friends may not agree with
- make a mistake or a wrong decision
- eat a meal before it gets cold
- set aside time for each child individually
- be emotional
- be creative in developing solutions for dealing with "everyday life"
- say we don't know the answer
- say we know the answer
- have days of temporary insanity
- say we can't do it alone
- not take everything we are told by professionals to heart
- hold on to our hopes and dreams
- eat the last cookie in the house
- cry, even when we are happy
- throw up our hands and say "I am not doing this today!"
- try new ways of solving problems
- an uninterrupted telephone conversion
- just be a parent, and have fun with our child
- speak up and have someone listen to us
- not like "Barney" and all his cutesy little friends
- get out of the house
- have fun
- ask the hard questions and receive answers, honest answers
- say "I don't think that is any of your business"
- seek a second or even third opinion
- Life, liberty and the pursuit of a full nights sleep!

Waking up

Sometimes what happens at the beginning of the day sets the mood for the rest of the day.

My child wakes up too early and wanders around the house

I CAN

- put a gate on the bedroom door.
- leave my child's door open a little and put a bell on the doorknob.
- turn music on in the room.
- let my child play quietly in his room.
- let my child look at books in his room.
- set an alarm clock in his room so he knows when it is OK to leave his room.
- have a box of quiet toys in my bedroom that my child can play with until I get up.

My child is hard to wake up

I CAN

- cuddle and sing a special song to him.
- gently rub his back or move his arms and legs.
- attach a cassette player to a timer that will go off automatically at a preset time.
- let my child pick the music he wants to wake up to.
- consider if setting an earlier bedtime would help.
- set alarm to play a radio station when it goes off.

My child wakes up in a bad mood

I CAN

- cuddle and sing to him.
- play music.
- let him go back to sleep for 5-10 minutes.
- give him some "space."
- review the things that will happen during the day.
- allow a comfortable amount of time for waking up before the structured activities of the day begin.

My child wakes up active and alert

I CAN

- put their energy to use doing chores, playing, etc.
- use this time to work on dressing skills, language or planning the day.

Dressing

My child gets frustrated when she tries to dress or undress herself

I CAN

- use clothes that are stretchy and have no buttons, snaps or zippers.
- alter clothes to make them easier for my child to put on without my help, such as putting loops in the sides of pants for easier pulling up.
- use shoes that slip on or have velcro.
- make sure my child has enough time to get dressed at a pace consistent with her ability.
- keep my eyes open for signs of frustration and offer to share the job with my child. "You can pull your pants up, then I will zip and snap them."

My child is not interested in getting dressed

I CAN

- have a box/bag of "dress-up" clothes for play time.
- give my child more choices in what she wears.
- plan something that my child wants to do so that it will happen after she gets dressed.
- make dressing time more interesting by introducing games, songs or doing "silly" things like putting her socks on her hands.
- let her dress in front of a mirror.

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My child likes to get dressed and undressed

I CAN

- support my child's abilities by commenting on what she has done by herself.
- play a "color" game by naming a color and having my child put the piece of clothing that is that color on/off.
- name a body part and have my child pick the clothes that go with that body part.
- encourage language skills by naming each piece of clothing as she is getting dressed or undressed.
- call attention to how different clothing feels such as soft, rough, smooth, etc.
- encourage her to check the weather and pick clothes accordingly.

My child cannot dress herself

I CAN

- remember that typically children can undress before they can dress themselves.
- encourage my child to use the skills she has that will make dressing / undressing easier, such as lifting arms or legs. I may have to show her what I want her to do, so she will understand what I expect.
- encourage my child to do those parts which she is capable of doing by starting with simple tasks such as taking off socks.
- start the "job" and let my child finish.
- place my hands on my child's hands and guide her through some of the dressing/undressing routines.
- help my child become more aware of what is happening by naming the clothes, naming my child's body parts and describing what I am doing as it is happening, "shirt on."
- play games or sing songs while dressing such as peek-a-boo, "little piggy" and "this is the way we. . ."
- give my child chances to practice using "dress-up" clothes or dressing a doll.
- pick a doll and doll clothes with fasteners that match my child's abilities.

My child takes a long time to get dressed

I CAN

- have my child pick out her own clothes the night before.
- have pictures as reminders of all the steps in the dressing routine.
- plan ahead so there is enough time to get dressed.
- limit distractions by dressing in a place where there are not so many things that will take her attention away from dressing.
- get dressed at the same time as my child in the same room. As I am getting dressed, I can describe what I am doing and comment on each step that my child completes, "Your shirt is on."
- decide with my child how long she has to get dressed and use a song or kitchen timer as a reminder for when she should be finished.
- cut a smiley face sticker in half. When one half is placed in the heel of each shoe, it is easier to figure out which shoe goes on which foot.

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To school

My child loves going to preschool

I CAN
- learn the names of the other children in my child's class so we can talk about his friends at home.
- make a picture book of his classmates which can be used in many ways to practice emerging skills (naming, sorting, matching, counting, etc.)
- visit my child's class.
- offer to help with classroom projects.
- learn the songs, fingerplays and games used at school so we can do them at home.
- encourage my child to make and send special messages to teachers and classmates such as pictures or he can tell me what he wants to say and I can write it for him.
- get a notebook for my child to take back and forth to school for communication with the teacher.

My child does not want to go to preschool

I CAN
- arrange to visit the preschool and meet the teacher before the school year starts.
- try to find the source of the problem (bus ride, teacher, bus driver, other child/children, meals , teasing, school routine, etc.)
- fill a picture holder (like the ones we carry in our wallets) with pictures of family and children at school. If my child misses family members during the day, he has a picture that he can look at.
- make plans ahead of time with the teacher for my child to share a favorite book, pet, stuffed animal, snack, etc., with the class.
- get a calendar of school activities so he can know what will be happening each day.
- invite his teacher to my home.
- with the cooperation of his teacher, I could stay in the classroom for a period of time and decrease the amount of time each day. Eventually he will stay by himself.

My child has toileting accidents on the bus

I CAN
- make sure my child uses the potty before getting on the bus (home to school and school to home.)
- limit the amount my child drinks before getting on the bus.

My child loves to ride the bus to school

I CAN
- build upon his interest by identifying the color of the bus, naming other people on the bus, naming places he passed, talking about what things he will see first, next, and last, reviewing the bus rules.
- make a simple "I ride the bus to school" book which includes pictures of people who ride the bus and a sequence of pictures of things he sees while riding the bus.
- help my child make a card or gift for the bus driver.
- sing "The Wheels on the Bus" and include the other children who ride the bus as a part of the song.
- help my child understand "time" by giving him cues to let him know when the bus will arrive. For example, draw a picture of a clock that shows the time the bus comes and tell him the bus will come when the real clock looks like the clock you drew.

My child is afraid of bus noise

I CAN
- prepare my child before the bus arrives, warn him there will be a loud noise.
- make a tape of different sounds, including bus noises, play guessing games such as: telling what makes the sound or pointing to the picture of what makes the sound. Include noises that upset my child, noises that do not upset my child and noises my child may not be familiar with.
- let my child wear earphones.

My child does not like to ride the bus

I CAN
- think about the difference between the days he goes to school and the days he does not. . .can the routine be more consistent?
- make arrangements ahead of time with the bus driver for my child to sit up front or with a "favorite" friend.
- ask if it is possible to have music on the bus.

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What did you do today?

I suddenly felt left out when Dara started preschool. In early intervention I was with her the entire time. In preschool there were times I did not talk to the teacher for weeks. Dara could not tell me what she made in class that day, what she ate, what books she read or what songs she sang. I felt like I was losing touch. Her teacher, Carol, and I made a checklist which went back and forth to school everyday. I give Carol information about what happens at home and Carol lets me know what happens at school. (Did Dara use her words to solve conflicts? Did she help at clean-up time? Did she go potty? What job did she do that morning.) There is also space where we can write notes or ask questions. Our checklist includes the goals on Dara's IEP. I really get a good picture of what Dara does each day. It only takes a few minutes to complete. I feel much more in touch with and much more of an equal partner in my child's education.

Playing alone

My child plays well alone

I CAN

- show my child new ways of using the same toys.
- use this time to do something I need to do.
- encourage my child's play skills by describing what I see her doing.
- provide dress-up clothes and other household items to encourage pretend play.
- use a mirror so my child can watch herself playing.
- expand her play skills by having different kinds of play materials such as toys, sand, water, books and blocks.
- encourage use of motor skills by offering wind-up toys, stacking toys or playdough with cookie cutters and rolling pin.

PLAYDOUGH

RECIPE

3 cups of flour 1 1/2 cups of salt 6 tsp. cream of tartar 3 tbls. of oil 3 cups of water add 1 tsp. food coloring to water	Put dry ingredients into skillet (electric) 150 degrees, add liquids and stir together. Heat until mixture pulls away from sides. Knead to finish drying out moisture. Store in closed container. (One batch makes dough for 6-7 children)

Alternate Recipe: 2 small Koolaide packages, 2 1/2 cups of flour, 1/2 cup of salt, 3 tbls. of oil and 2 cups of boiling water.

My child wants me to play with him

I CAN

- set limits, for example, "I will play with you for fifteen minutes, then I will fix dinner."
- consider the things I am doing when my child wants me to play with her. Could I have my child do the activity with me? Examples might include: cleaning, making dinner and washing. (Refer to Chores section for suggestions)
- set aside "special" times during the day or week when my child knows it is "our" time to play together.
- imitate what she is doing.
- encourage turn taking.
- encourage talking.
- encourage pretend play.

Play

Play is how young children like to spend their time. When you hear someone say "He is just playing," it sounds like play is not important. WRONG ! PLAY IS IMPORTANT!

Parents , teachers and therapists want children to learn. Learning is happening all the time when children are playing. In fact, children often learn more through their play than when we try to "teach" them something. Play does not require expensive toys. Dropping a spoon on the floor over and over; sitting in a box; making faces in the mirror; imitating animal sounds or using your hand to make "shadow" puppets can be playful activities. Just like our children learn to sit, crawl, walk and then run, play happens in stages too. At first, play might include watching things move, tasting and banging. Before children start to play with other children they watch other children playing, they play alone and they play beside other children. Playing with other children usually starts by trading toys and usually lasts for short periods of time. Cooperation, pretending, sharing and complex play routines develop as children grow older and have more chances to play with other children.

My child is not interested in playing with toys

I CAN

- have many types of toys, such as action toys, puzzles, musical toys, pretend toys and dolls that match my child's age ability.
- play with her toys to try and encourage her to join me.
- watch what my child plays with, such as kitchen utensils, boxes, pots and pans, measuring cups, etc. Use these to "create" a play routine which promotes sorting, stacking, pouring and banging.
- try verbal play, such as singing songs and making sounds.
- play hide and seek using toys such as dolls, stuffed animals or balls.
- make up play routines that do not necessarily require toys, such as making a tent with a blanket and chairs and pretend camping; fix a picnic and play a guessing game with food items in the basket or use big boxes to play "train" or hide and seek.
- set up an area where it is OK to be very messy and have messy things available for my child to "explore:" pudding, playdough, shaving cream, etc.
- check to see if there is a toy lending library in my area.

My child only watches TV

I CAN

- choose a program or video with action that I can do with my child, such as singing, dancing, exercising. For example, Preschool Power is aired on PBS (Public Broadcasting Station) or available on video at your local library.
- choose a program that shows how to make something, then using things in the house, make the item together.
- limit TV time.
- watch TV with my child and talk about the program.
- use this time to hug and hold my child.
- use this time to practice "exercises" such as ankle flex or muscle tone exercises.
- make a "play" chart with pictures of different play activities she wants to do.

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I am a Cool Dude !

My son Curtis, would use self-stimulation behavior (moving his head, hands and feet) whenever he felt happy or when he needed to calm himself. Times when this happened included: crowds of people, when there was too much noise or when there were many things going on at the same time. Some professionals told me that this was not socially acceptable behavior and it needed to be stopped. Another professional suggested that what my son was doing was serving a purpose/ function for him and , instead of merely trying to stop the behavior, replace it with a behavior that served the same purpose for my son and is more socially acceptable. I bought a lightweight, colorful cassette player with spongy headphones (my son is sensitive to some textures). We went home, placed them on his head and he used them for over two hours! What a difference! The self-stimulation behavior stopped while he was using the cassette. I am so excited! I feel the headphones should go with him everywhere. I learned how important it is to keep searching for answers, because eventually I will find one.

My child puts things in her mouth all the time

(Please note: this is something that is common for infants and may continue for some children into the preschool years. This is especially true for children who may not be getting enough stimulation/information from their other senses.)

I CAN

- be aware that tasting is one way my child learns about her world.
- find another object that will give her the same kind of stimulation but is more functional or safer. such as sucking on a straw, lollipop or popsicle. or blowing bubbles.
- provide her with other choices that will engage her attention such as sand, water, playdough. bouncing, tickling or jumping.

My child repeats actions (sometimes this is called self-stimulation)

I CAN

- encourage her to use the same skills doing something that is more functional or has a purpose. For example: substitute banging a pan with a toy drum, hammer or musical instruments.
- join the activity and introduce turn-taking.
- get on my child's eye level and imitate.

Joint attention

When my daughter was younger, she had very poor eye contact with others, no interest in normal toys and seemingly no need for social interaction. What she did like, though, was spinning plates or lids. She could (and still can) make "music" with those spinning objects. Her eyes would glow as she fastened them on spinning plates. As the plate began to lose force and gradually lower itself to the floor, her eyes and head would follow it until she would be lying on the floor beside it. The second it stopped she was spinning it again. She did it over and over until I couldn't stand the noise or the futility of that type of activity anymore. If I tried to distract her by saying her name or bringing her a toy, I was ignored. If I took the plate, she would throw a tantrum. Then I heard about imitation and turn-taking. With nothing to lose, I tried it. When she started to spin a plate I sat on the floor beside her and also started spinning a plate. After a while, I noticed her watching my plate out of the corner of her eye. I would wait until her plate started spinning, then I would spin mine. Gradually, when her plate quit spinning, she would give my plate her full attention until it was still. At this point, I decided to add turn-taking. On the floor we would sit facing each other with a plate between us. She would spin first. When it stopped I would say "my turn" while picking up and spinning. At her turns I would say "Hannah's turn" handing her the plate. During this whole process, I would deliberately try to make eye contact as I talked to her (my turn, your turn) eventually just saying her name would get a look from her eye to eye. Then she tolerated my taking her plate and substituting a toy. She has come a long way. She still likes to spin things, but it is not the only thing she enjoys doing.

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Playing with other children

My child mostly watches other children

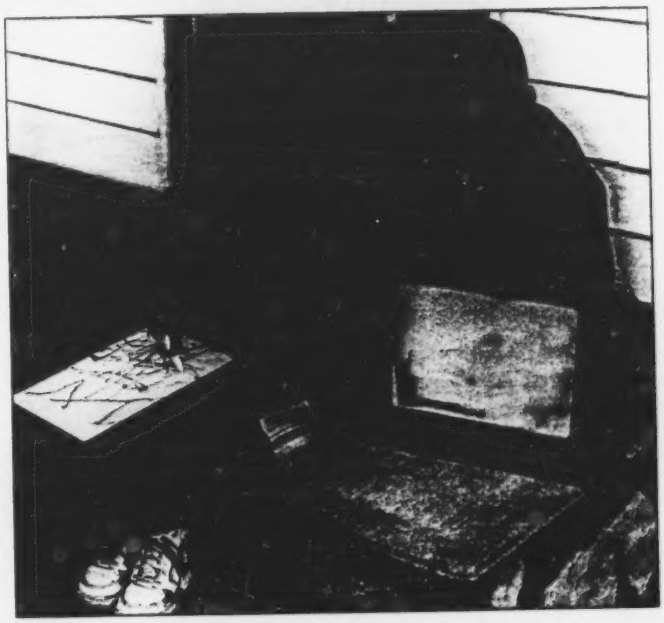
I CAN
- place him in the same area and at the same level (for example on the floor) where other children are playing.
- start to play a game or with a toy and invite other children to join.
- try to get him to play with children his own age by inviting other children to my house to play and having fun activities available.
- talk with other families about having my child go to their house to play.
- remember that children are "active watchers" before they imitate or play with other children.

My child bosses other children around

I CAN
- let them work it out for themselves as long as no one is getting hurt.
- provide chances for my child to play games and activities that require taking turns, such as Connect Four, UNO and Candyland. I may need to modify the rules of the game so that my child can experience taking turns without having to know the specific skills of the game.
- read stories with my child about friendship and sharing.
- talk about times when my child was bossed by someone else and how that felt.
- join the play routine and model play skills such as sharing, taking turns and cooperation.

My child doesn't defend himself when he gets picked on or when toys are taken away from him

I CAN
- observe to see if the children work it out for themselves.
- watch my child's facial expression and put his feelings into words for him. "You are sad when he takes your doll."
- encourage my child to use words to let the other child know how he feels.
- teach my child and the children he plays with "stop" or "no" using sign language
- suggest to the child who took the toy that he show my child how to play with the toy. (Focus on using other children as models.)



My child wants to play with other children, but they cannot understand his speech

I CAN
- give my child other ways of letting people know what he wants by using gestures or simple sign language.
- invite other children to play at our house so they can get to know my child better and learn ways to communicate with my child.
- teach the other people (children and adults) that are usually around my child the signs that my child knows. (Note: Sign language can be a useful means of communication for children with limited verbal skills as well as children who have a hearing impairment. Don't worry that if you teach your child signs that they will not talk, because most of the time using sign language also encourages spoken language.)
- remember that preschool children are very accepting and will often work out their own way of communicating.

Playing outside

The Outside — Children should go outdoors every day for exercise, fresh air and fun. You and your children will have greater freedom outdoors to jump, hop, swing, look and listen. Let your children make noise. Remind them about any rules you have for playing outside.

My child does not walk

I CAN

- buy a big push toy (large truck, baby stroller, lawn mower) that she can hold onto while she walks. (Make sure that the toy is heavy enough, otherwise she might push the toy out from under her.)
- let her play in the sand box or small swimming pool.
- let other children pull her in a wagon or push her on a riding toy.
- have riding toys that she can make move with her feet.
- encourage her to be involved with other children by having her do the things that she can do. For example, in a game of t-ball she can bat and another child can run the bases.

My child enjoys playing outside

I CAN

- give my child opportunities to practice motor skills on a swing, slide, tricycle or monkey bars.
- pay attention to all the sounds, sights, smells and textures and call my child's attention to these things: "the air is cold and I can feel the wind blowing on my face," "listen, I can hear an airplane."
- play "Red Light-Green Light", "Mother May I" or "Ring-Around-the-Rosey."
- give my child a chance to blow bubbles. (Blowing bubbles is a fun way of practicing fine motor and communication skills such as putting things in/out, breath control, making sounds and strengthening mouth muscles.)

SOAP BUBBLES

Liquid dishwashing detergent or tearless shampoo, diluted with water, makes economical soap bubbles.

Experiment with your brand for the best proportion of water. Twist the end of a pipe cleaner into a ring for the wand. Children can use a plastic margarine tub filled with the soap mixture for dipping. In addition to the pipe cleaner, a fly swatter could be used.

My child needs practice using her muscles

I CAN

- take her swimming.
- have riding toys for her to use.
- let her run, run, run.
- take music outside and dance.
- take a walk, play running/jumping games such as hopscotch, kickball and jump rope.

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Chores

Letting our children do little household jobs is one way we can help our children become more independent and learn responsibility. It is typical for young children to want to imitate what the big people in their lives are doing, but as our children grow older they sometimes resist doing chores.

The way we present these activities to our children might make a difference in how willing they are to do jobs. Things go best when we can do jobs with our children, when we ask our children to do things that they have the ability to do and when we make jobs a fun experience.

My child enjoys being a "helper"

I CAN

- think about ways my child can help and at the same time become more independent. Some ideas include: dusting, sweeping, washing cars, yard work, pulling weeds, carrying small branches, cleaning his books / toys, helping do dishes, making the bed, picking up clothes helping with trash, feeding animals, sorting/ washing/folding clothes, stirring the koolaide and breaking the spaghetti before cooking.
- remember that my child is a child and I cannot expect him to do jobs as well as older children or adults.
- use this as a time to talk about sorting, shapes, colors, sizes and textures. For example, have my child put his clothes in one pile and everyone else's clothes in another pile; match socks; put all white things in one pile and all colored things in a different pile; compare the size of my child's jeans and the size of mom's jeans.
- Think about the skills my child needs to develop/ practice and encourage him to do chores that will give him a chance to use these skills. For example, if my child is developing his fine motor skills, working in the garden will give him a chance to dig, pour, pull and put in.

My child says "I can't do that"

I CAN

- encourage my child to try by describing a time when he did the same or similar task.
- break the job into little "doable" parts.
- do the job one step at a time.
- use "creative" ways of doing a job. For example, instead of just picking up the toys and putting them away, make the toys "march" to their homes.
- give my child choices. A chart with pictures of different jobs will let him see the job he can pick.

My child is afraid of some household noises

I CAN

- use the taped sounds suggestions in the TO SCHOOL section.
- let my child ride on the sweeper while it is running.
- warn my child before the noise happens.
- consider having "toy" appliances for my child that will help him get used to the appliance and he can use at the same time as I am using the appliance.
- let my child wear earplugs or earphones when I'm making the noise.
- start the noise in a room away from my child and gradually bring the noise closer. (A person that my child feels comfortable with may need to be with him as the noise comes closer.)

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Mealtime at home

Things to keep in mind about mealtime

I CAN

- establish a routine that will increase the chances that mealtime is a happy/pleasant experience for everybody.
- set up mealtime " rules" with my child's age and abilities in mind.
  How long does my child stay with an activity?
  How much food can my child eat at one time?
- change a "family tradition" if it doesn't fit my child's needs.
- set a good example (manners, use of utensils and behavior.)
- avoid foods that get my child "wound-up."

My child is a picky eater and refuses certain foods

I CAN

- remember that to some extent this may be typical of some children.
- remember there is no single food that is required for good health, try alternatives.
- offer the same food on many different occasions. Some children need to become familiar with the smell, sight and/or texture of foods before eating them.
- give my child choices.
- let her help make the meal which may help her be more interested in the meal.
- try to figure out if texture, temperature, color, "sound," smell or raw vs. cooked makes a difference in what she will eat.
- encourage her to do things for herself, such as putting butter on her own bread.
- be aware of the foods my child eats over a week's period of time, rather than focusing on a particular day or meal. (If I'm really concerned, I can write down what my child eats over a week's period of time.)
- check with my doctor or WIC for how much my child should be eating to stay healthy.
- start with small amounts of food on her plate.
- give my child time and then she will eat.

My child does not feed herself

I CAN

- encourage as much independence as my child is capable of (could be messy.)
- start with finger foods such as crackers, bananas, raisins or cheese.
- use adaptive utensils, if my child has trouble with regular silverware.

For example,

- bend handle of spoon so the scoop is lower than the handle.
- for a better grip, wrap a piece of cloth or paper towel on the handle and secure with tape or purchase foam tubing with a hole through it (hardware store) to put around the spoon or fork.
- use my hand over my child's hand to guide the spoon.
- use a sippy cup or cup with lid and straw for drinking.
- a teacher or therapist may have catalogs of adaptive equipment for you to look at.
- use serving utensils that match my child's ability such as small covered pitcher for pouring.

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My child is messy when she tries to feed herself

I CAN

- use hand over hand approach.
- use foods that stick to utensils such as pudding, oatmeal, cool whip and mashed potatoes.
- change my child's position so that foods can be easily reached and my child is physically supported and balanced.
- place an old shower curtain or piece of plastic on the floor.
- remember practice makes perfect, this too will improve.
- allow her to be messy and have her help clean up later.

My child does not want to stop what she is doing and take time to eat

I CAN

- establish a routine and a consistent time.
- give her a verbal reminder five minutes before mealtime.
- give her an auditory reminder five minutes before mealtime by ringing a bell or setting a kitchen timer.
- give her a visual reminder five minutes before mealtime showing her a picture of mealtime.
- give her a chance to smell or taste the food we will be eating.
- increase her interest in mealtime by: letting her set the table; reading a book at the end of dinner; singing a song before eating; using interesting placemats; decorating the food.

My child plays with her food

I CAN

- keep serving bowls off the table.
- cut the food and butter the rolls before setting her plate on the table.
- play "tea party" to practice.
- talk to her during the meal to keep her attention.
- remember that children eat with their fingers before they use silverware.
- remind her which foods are OK to eat with her fingers.
- make sure that she has a spoon and fork that are easy for her to use.

The Raisin Test

Grandma had watched Anne Marie all day. When we picked her up, we learned she hardly ate a thing all day. Grandma tried all day long to get her to eat. She said she felt like she had cooked the whole day. I knew how Grandma felt. Many times I made mini-meals when I thought she had to be hungry, only to have them rejected. You can't make my daughter eat. If she is hungry, she will eat. Otherwise, you are wasting your time. Also I was often frustrated when her mealtime was not the same time as the rest of the family. I shared with Grandma our "test". This test has proven to be a real timesaver and has decreased the stress of eating schedules. Raisins are her favorite food. I put a few raisins on the table in front of her. If she picks them up and drops or throws them, I know to wait awhile. If she gobbles them down, I know it is time to fix this girl some food.

How Much Food is Enough?

As an infant, my child was a great little eater, fruits and veggies she loved them all. But something happened to her when she turned three. She decided that she did not like most of the foods that I offered her. Things that she normally loved, all of a sudden, she wanted nothing to do with. I became very concerned that she was not getting the proper nutrition that she needed to stay healthy, so I took her to the doctor, hoping to find out what was wrong. Boy, was I surprised when he told me that this was normal for most three year old children. I should try offering her smaller portions more often, and that a normal healthy child will naturally select a balanced diet over a weeks time not a 24 hour period. He also told me the appropriate amounts of food for her age and weight. Guess What! It was much less than I had been trying to get her to eat.

Visitors . . . When visitors come to our house

My child shows off, is rude or wants all the attention

I CAN

- remember that to some extent this is very typical, like when he interrupts my phone conversations.
- give my child an example of taking turns by giving him a chance to show or tell the visitor something first, and then having my turn to be with the visitor.
- give my child a choice: "You can play with your toys here by yourself or you can play in your room."
- ask the visitor to pay attention to my child for a period of time.
- talk with my child about appropriate behavior at times when he is being appropriate.
- let my child help serve the visitor a snack / drink.

My child shows no awareness of visitors that I want my child to know better

I CAN

- give the visitor my child's favorite toy or book and ask the visitor either to play with the toy or read the book to my child.
- tell my child interesting things about the person who will be visiting.
- have him help serve a snack.
- ask him to take the visitor's coat to hang it up or put it in a specific place.
- ask the visitor if they can think of any way that my child could get to know them better.

My child is too friendly with people he doesn't know (this also applies to shopping and community settings)

I CAN

- use a video from the library or video store to give me ideas of how to help my child with people he does not know.
- make a book with pictures of people our family knows and people we do not know.
- have my child point to people in the book we know and people we do not know. This, also, helps my child learn to sort.
- use the book to talk about things we say and do with people we know, and things we say and do with people we do not know.

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Bath time

My child loves bath time

I CAN

- play games that encourage my child to follow directions.
- read stories, name body parts, play counting games.
- show him how to do things for himself such as washing face, brushing teeth, etc.
- talk about things in the bath tub and comment on the texture of typical bath items. "The wash cloth is soft, the soap is hard."
- have toys for bath time that will allow him to discover concepts like sink, float, full and empty.
- change water temperature so he will experience "warm" and "cold."
- have containers in the tub that will allow him to practice pouring.
- use shaving cream for smearing or drawing pictures.
- let my child wring out the wash cloth/sponge to develop hand muscles.
- use the mirror to talk about body parts or just make silly faces. Children love to see their own reflection.

My child does not like to brush his teeth

I CAN

- use a flavor of toothpaste my child likes.
- let my child buy his own toothbrush.
- show my child how to brush.
- let my child practice (maybe brush mom's teeth or a doll's.)
- brush in front of a mirror so she can see herself and make funny faces.
- let my child use a vibrating or musical toothbrush.

My child likes to play in the water at the sink

I CAN

- remember that it is typical for children to like to play in the water.
- set aside "special times" when playing in the sink is OK, such as when washing dishes (keep safety in mind.)
- combine water play with other activities such as washing things that need to be washed by hand and then let my child practice "rolling" skills by having her help me roll the hand-washed clothes in a towel.

My child does not do things for herself

I CAN

- let my child practice by washing dolls, washing mom's hair, combing the hair of a brother or sister.
- think about ways I can change things so my child can do more for herself. For example, use liquid soap, so my child can push the top to get the soap, instead of a using bar of soap; have a step stool close to the sink so my child can reach the sink; have toothbrush/toothpaste in a place where she can reach them; put her name or special symbol on her things so she knows what belongs to her.
- give her enough time to do things for herself.
- have a mirror so she can see what she is doing.

My child resists getting a bath

I CAN

- make bath time interesting. Think about the things my child enjoys and decide if some of her "favorite" activities can be done in the bath tub. In addition to the ideas listed above, consider: scented soap, bubble bath, special bath crayons, a visor to protect face when shampooing hair and tearless shampoo.
- agree on a schedule, then post the schedule so my child has a "picture" reminder of the days we have agreed are "bath" / "shampoo" days.
- allow enough time for a bath so my child and I are not rushed.
- give my child more choices about bath time. For example, let him pick a special kind of soap, the color towel he will use or the toys that he will play with in the tub.

Toilet training

My child is not potty trained yet

I CAN
- remember that potty training is a very individual thing and not all children are potty trained at the same age.
- consider my child's abilities and stage of development.
- put a potty chair in the bathroom a few days before I am going to start potty training.
- use words/signs that my child can use to let me know she needs to go potty.
- use clothes that are easy to get on and off.
- watch for signs that she might be using to let me know she needs to go potty such as pulling at diaper/clothes, making faces or going to a particular part of the house.
- take her to the potty each time she wants to go.
- Praise her for any behavior related to going to the potty such as sitting on the potty chair, pulling down her own pants, etc.
- take her to the potty at the times she usually has a wet diaper.
- arrange a special shopping day with my child and let her pick out special underwear.
- think about things that will help my child relax while sitting on the potty such as looking at a book, having a conversation or playing with a toy.
- turn on the water (which might encourage her to go potty.)
- patience, patience, patience.
- try a schedule of "potty" breaks at regular times.
- have her sit on her potty chair while I am going to the bathroom.

Sleep time

Establishing a bedtime routine

I CAN
- set a regular time to go to bed.
- set a routine of things that usually happen before bed that might include brushing teeth, potty, reading a book, singing songs and/or listening to music.
- have a regular place for my child to sleep.
- help her know when it is bedtime by telling her it is almost bedtime, setting a kitchen timer, having a special program she watches just before bedtime.
- use quiet activities or pleasant events before bedtime to help her calm down, such as singing or reading.
- keep to the regular bedtime routine as often as possible.

My child will only go to sleep if I rock her

I CAN
- set a time limit for the bedtime routine and let her pick the activity she wants to do before bed, if she wants to be rocked that is her choice.
- decrease the amount of time by setting a timer and gradually shortening the amount of time until it is within reasonable limits.

My child wakes up crying in the middle of the night

I CAN
- stay calm and remember that waking in the night happens to all children at times.
- listen for a few minutes to see if my child quiets without me doing anything.
- provide her with comfort in her own bed.
- try to find the problem: bad dream, stomach ache, ear ache, fever, etc.
- provide my child with medication recommended by the doctor if the problem is medical.
- give my child things that will help her feel more secure during the night, such as: a night light, a special blanket, a special stuffed animal, a flashlight or a spray bottle of water to "spray" monsters away.
- avoid activities before bedtime that might "trouble" her during the night such, as "rough play" or scary stories.

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My child resists going to bed

I CAN

- follow the ideas for establishing a bed time routine.
- let her pick a quiet activity before bed. (For children who need order/routine, it may be helpful to stay with the same activity each night.)
- provide her with a chance to do physically "tiring" activities during the day.
- take her by the hand back to bed each time she gets up, saying nothing.
- have a different family member put her to bed.
- use a heating pad or warm water bottle under the covers for warmth and comfort.
- let her fall asleep with a favorite stuffed animal. (You may want to remove the animal after she is asleep.)

My child does not take a nap and becomes cranky in the early evening

I CAN

- set a daily "rest" time even if she does not sleep. Set a timer, alarm or use the length of a cassette tape so that she knows when it is OK to get back up.
- allow her to do "quiet" activities during the rest time.
- check to see if the things she is eating or drinking might be causing the problem - sometimes sugar and caffeine can effect moods and sleeping.
- remember that this is typical for some preschool children.

My child wets the bed

I CAN

- remember that it is typical for some children to have occasional accidents until they are six or seven.
- make sure she goes potty before bed.
- limit the amount she drinks in the evening.
- act like this is normal and "no big deal."
- let her help clean up by putting sheets and wet clothes in the washer.
- talk to the doctor to rule out any medical problem
- comment when my child has a "dry" night, "Your clothes and bed are dry this morning."
- tell brothers and sisters to not tease her.

My child has night terrors

I CAN

- remember that it is typical for some preschool children to experience "nightmares" and is often connected with their growing independence and "fear" of new things they do not yet understand.
- provide comfort and support.
- talk with my child's doctor or other professional.
- leave a night light on in her room.
- be CREATIVE: stand a stuffed dragon or dog next to the bed to "protect" the bed; line up all the stuffed animals in the doorway to "protect" the room; draw a pretend circle around the bed and tell her nothing will come into the circle; make a "dream-catcher."
- tell her that I will be in the house sleeping, too, and I will be there when she wakes up.

Breaking the Habit

When my child was very young I got into the habit of staying with her until she fell asleep. By the age of four she insisted that I lay down with her every night after we had gone through the regular bedtime routine. When I tried to break the habit by walking out of the room and letting her cry, she screamed until no one in the house could stand it. I tried a gradual way of breaking this habit.

The first week I sat next to her on the bed. The second week I sat on a chair next to the bed and held her hand. The third week I sat on a chair at the edge of the bed. The fourth week I sat at the doorway so my child could see me. The fifth week I sat in the hallway. The sixth week, after the regular routine, I left the room completely.

In the car

Before getting in the car

I CAN

- make sure that "bathroom" needs have been taken care of.
- tell him where we are going.
- show him pictures of where we are going. (This is particularly helpful for children who do not yet understand words.) Let him choose activities (music, games, toys, coloring) to take in the car.

My child needs to learn more independence

I CAN

- let him fasten his own seat belt.
- let him pick his own seat position..
- give him a choice of activities: sing, listen to music, play a game.

My child likes to travel

I CAN

- play games like "I Spy" or "Twenty-Questions."
- have "travel" game /toys in the car such as a "Magna-Doodle."
- comment about the things I see (stories, signs, cars, animals,) things I hear (train, horn, sirens) and things I can smell (bakery.)
- talk about street signs, the color of traffic lights/ cars and left/right when turning corners.
- play music.
- sing songs.
- play tapes with follow-along books.

My child won't sit still and unfastens his seat belt

I CAN

- think about those things my child does when he will sit still and decide if those same activities could be used in the car. Examples might include. toys, snacks and/or music.
- have another person sit next to him.
- place his car seat so that he can see out the window.
- call attention to the things that we pass or play games of "I Spy." If he has limited verbal skills. I might consider making a book of pictures of things that we typically pass when we are in the car and have my child find the things in the book that he sees outside.

A Special Choice

When my family takes a trip, I give each child a card with a smiley face in each corner. Before the trip begins, we review the rules: keep hands to yourself and no yelling. I tell them that when they are following the rules the smiley faces will stay on their card, when they break the rules, I will tear a corner (smiley face) off their card.

Each child who has one smiley face left will get to pick something special. The 'special choice' can be different depending on how long the trip will take. A typical 'special choice' is picking where we will eat lunch or dinner. Using this 'card' system has made several long trips much more pleasant!

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Community Setting

There are many fun places to go in your community. Things will go more smoothly if you plan ahead. Before you take a trip, talk with your child about what you will see, what you plan to do and safety rules. If your child does not know his name, give him a card with his name, address and phone number to use if he gets lost.

At places where adults and children are quiet and sit still

I CAN

- bring my child a meal or a snack.
- let him choose some favorite quiet toys, such as books, crayons, Magna Doodle, puzzles, etc. to take with him.
- sing songs at home that are typically sung at the meeting, so that my child is more familiar with at least part of the meeting.
- let him stay with a sitter or go to the nursery, if available.
- arrange with friends to take turns watching the children.
- gradually increase the amount of time he spends in the meeting, starting with the parts of the meeting in which he can participate.

A Zip Lock Bag

I was prepared. I knew it was important for Dara to be quiet and sit still. I packed some quiet toys, her favorite books, crayons and paper. The crayons were in a tin can which Dara insisted that she open herself. When I tried to help her open the can, she jerked it away from me. The noise of the lid crashing on the floor and crayons rolling all over was embarrassing. After that I always packed the crayons in a zip lock bag. It is more important for Dara to go places and experience new things than it is for me to worry about whether or not she will make too much noise!

At the library

I CAN

- talk with him about being in the library before we go.
- keep the amount of time spent at the library short.
- go during a less busy time of day.
- introduce him to the library by attending story time.
- let him get a library card.
- let him check out his own books.

At the swimming pool

I CAN

- choose a pool that matches my child's needs. (ramps, accessible bathroom, water temperature, etc.)
- check ahead to find out the pool's policy about using special equipment, floating devices and toys.
- have fun playing with my child.
- encourage him to practice motor skills in the water such as kicking, walking and throwing.
- use going to the pool as a motivator for my child to practice dressing and undressing skills.
- bring a friend if I need another pair of hands.
- make sure everyone has their bathing suit on before we go to the pool.

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At restaurants

I CAN

- start with the salad bar, if possible, so he does not have to wait.
- order ahead of time, if possible.
- check with the restaurant about the kind of seating they have available, if they do not have the type of seating that is most comfortable for my child (high chair, booster seat) I can consider bringing my own.
- have him pack a small snack, quiet toys and his own cup and silverware to take to the restaurant.
- ask for a table or booth that will best match his needs or interest, such as, close to the bathroom or in a "more quiet place."
- have him sit in a place where either I can engage his interest or there is something that is of interest to him. (Possibly by a window.)
- for messy eating, see MEALTIME section.

At the movies

I CAN

- try some of the suggestions for the quiet setting.
- try going to the movie during his nap time, so he will sleep.
- get a sitter.
- pick movies that will hold his interest and attention.
- increase his interest by reading him a book or telling him about the movie before we go.
- load up on popcorn.
- wait for the movie to come out on video, if all else fails.

At athletic events, parades, circus etc.

I CAN

- take one of his friends with us.
- introduce him to other children about the same age who are at the same event.
- ask older children I know if they would like to take him for a brief walk.
- prepare him for the event by talking about what will happen, showing him pictures of similar events, watching TV or video shows of similar events and letting him know if it will be noisy or crowded.
- have him wear ear plugs or cotton if the noise bothers him.
- stand or sit in areas where there are fewer people.
- have him pack a snack/drinks to take along.
- be creative about seating - take a blanket, stadium seat, wheelchair, etc. Make arrangements to watch the parade from inside of a building to lessen the noise.

At parks and playgrounds

I CAN

- have fun playing with my child.
- encourage him to use the motor skills he has and try new motor skills such as kicking balls, throwing, catching, running, jumping, climbing, hopping, etc.
- do some of the things I would like him to do and see if he imitates me.
- bring some toy/ containers from home for him to play with in the sand box.
- use the sand box at the playground, so I don't always have the mess at my house.
- go to the playground at times when fewer children will be there if crowds or safety are an issue for my child.
- choose a playground that you know well and has the kind of equipment that best matches your child's abilities.
- let him "explore" all the different things available at the playground.
- make sure he is wearing clothes that will allow him to play freely and safely.
- invite friends to join us at the playground.

Practicing Therapy Exercises

My child goes to a therapist because he has poor muscle tone. The therapist gave me exercises to do at home to help my child with his muscle strength and balance. Every time I tried to do these exercises, my child "pitched a fit." One day at the playground, I was walking on the railroad ties that they used as a border around the jungle gym. Without me saying a word, my child tried to do what I was doing. A little later, there were some children trying to do "chin ups" on the bars. I saw my son watching them intently. After the children left, I noticed my son trying to do the same thing. I suddenly realized that my son was practicing the things the therapist wanted us to without me having to make a big deal about it!

Shopping

Getting ready to go shopping

I CAN

- tell her where we are going.
- show her pictures of where we are going.
- let her help plan the shopping trip (pick out pictures of what to buy.)
- have a list of things I want to buy so the trip won't take any longer than it has to.
- set reasonable limits with my child.
- plan my shopping trip with my child's needs in mind (where we shop, how far from home, how long we shop and kind of store.)
- choose stores where the lighting, noise level and number of people will not "upset her."
- shop at a time when she is not tired, cranky or hungry.
- plan ways that she can take an active part in the shopping trip.
- avoid those parts of the store that cause the most problems.
- find a sitter or check with Family Resources about respite care, especially if the purpose is to browse or "window-shop."
- make sure stores have accessible ramps for wheelchairs or modified carts that suit my child's needs.
- ask the grocery store to have a candy-free check-out lane.

Note: If your child misbehaves on a regular basis during shopping-refer to the DISCIPLINE section for suggestions.

My child likes to have something to do while shopping

I CAN

- give her responsibility such as matching the coupons to the real items.
- talk to her during the shopping trip: comment on the things in the store, what things are used for, the size of items, the color of items, the smell of items, etc.
- give her chances to make choices such as what kind of cereal to buy.
- let her pay for groceries.
- bring a bag of "dress-up" clothes while I go clothes shopping.
- let her pack a bag of her things to take on the shopping trip (books, crayons, cassette player, puppet, calculator.)

Discipline

The goal of discipline is to help our child learn ways to control their own behavior. Sometimes, we may not like what our child is doing, but their behavior may be typical for their age. When thinking about what we expect our child to do and how we expect our child to behave, it is a good idea to think about what is typical for my child.

Before my child misbehaves

I CAN

- make my home a comfortable place for him to be.
- arrange things in my house so that I don't "tempt" him to get in trouble.
- show him ways to behave by using my words to solve problems, expressing my feelings without aggression, taking time to think before I react or overreact and sharing.
- set reasonable limits and expectations that match his age, interest, ability and attention span.
- give him enough time to respond to my request or complete an activity.
- let him know my rules using language he can understand (for some children pictures work best.)
- establish a routine so that he has some idea of what will be happening each day (again a daily picture schedule can be helpful.)
- give him attention when he is showing self-control. Children who can count on our attention have less need to do things we do not like to get our attention.
- avoid "power struggles" with my child.
- decide what are the most important things to pay attention to and what things I can let "slide."
- keep an "eye" on what is happening and intervene before the problem gets bigger. For example, my child likes to do things for himself, but when he gets frustrated he throws a temper tantrum. If I "see" he is getting frustrated I can offer some little assistance that will allow him to finish the task without becoming frustrated. Another example is when I see a fight "brewing." I can move to where the children are playing. My presence might "calm things down" or I can start playing with the children and model ways to solve the conflict.
- give my child choices, instead of commands or demands.
- remember that how I respond to my child is "teaching" him how to handle situations. This is true if I am positive and it is also true if I am negative or aggressive.

A Word About Praise

Many times we hear how important it is to praise our children. Praise is one way we let our children know they are important and have value. It is important to praise our children! It is even more important to be specific with our children about what they have done that pleases us! Instead of saying things like "good boy" say, "Thank you for putting your plate in the sink." Sometimes when we say "good boy" our children are not exactly sure what they have done that has made us happy. Another way we can "praise" our children is simply commenting on what they are doing. When children are playing together, we can say: "It looks like you are having fun making that garage." When we comment on what children are doing they learn that we pay attention to them when things are going well, not just when things are going badly.

My child whines when he does not get his own way

I CAN

- give him choices.
- get at eye level and say, "I will talk to you when you stop whining."
- encourage him to use words to let me know what he wants.
- be direct, simple and calm.

My child bites

I CAN

- firmly state "We do not bite people."
- give him choices of things that are OK to bite.
- observe if there are certain things that "trigger" biting and "step-in" with another choice before the actual biting happens.

My child says "no" / does not obey

I CAN
- remember that sometimes he says "no" and does not really mean it.
- remember that "no" is a sign of his growing independence.
- wait to see what he really DOES, instead of reacting to his "no" immediately.
- give him choices.
- think about what he is refusing to do and whether or not it is important enough to force the issue.
- praise him when he cooperates.

My child fights

I CAN
- remember that fighting is one way children learn self-control.
- model the behavior I expect.
- direct his attention to a different activity.
- wait to see if they "work it out," if no one is getting hurt.
- remove him from the situation to "cool off" or "calm down" (as a rule of thumb: one minute for each year of age is a reasonable amount of time to remove my child from a situation.)
- give him choices.
- get at my child's eye level, state the rule, be direct, simple and calm.
- use natural consequences.
- avoid power struggles.

My child throws temper tantrums

I CAN
- give him as little attention as possible until he shows more self control / calms down.
- walk away if he is not in danger of hurting himself or others.
- move him to a place where he will be alone until he shows more self control.

My child does things he knows he should not do

I CAN
- ignore the behavior if it is not that big a deal.
- give him other choices.
- direct his attention to a different activity.
- set up consequences, be firm and do what you say you are going to do.

Vacation / Holidays

My child doesn't do well in new environments or when there is a change in the routine

I CAN
- prepare her for the trip by showing her pictures, videotapes or movies of the places we will visit.
- make a picture book of activities we plan to do on the trip.
- hang pictures of the vacation site in her room.
- talk with her about trips I took when I was a child.
- buy postcards that she can send to family and friends while we are on our trip.
- make sure we do things she likes to do while we are on vacation.
- try to limit the number of new experiences.
- keep the schedule simple.
- take things on our trip that bring comfort such as a special blanket, stuffed toy, toy car, etc.
- allow her to help plan the activities.
- take a baby-sitter on vacation with us.
- limit the amount of time in the car and make frequent stops.
- try short trips at first and gradually increase the length of the trip.
- call ahead and make sure the places we are going have the things we need, such as ramps, child care services and medical facilities.

A Family Vacation

When we wanted to go on vacation we let our children choose the place. They wanted to go to the beach! I always want to do things "as a family," but I knew it would not be a "vacation" for me if we took our daughter to the beach. She loves water, but would drink half of the ocean and I pictured sand in her mouth, eyes - well you get the picture! Also one of the goals for my husband and me was to spend time with our other children. To do that we had to make a choice: leave our daughter, change our plans or forget our goal! We brainstormed and talked with our extended family who lived close to the beach. As things turned out we spent part of our vacation "as a family" and our daughter spent part of her vacation with her cousins, while the rest of us were at the beach.

Stages of Development

When should I worry?

When my son was 14 months old he was still not walking and most of the other children his age were walking by the time they were one.

At the age of three, most of the children in my daughter's preschool were talking in complete sentences. She was only using three words together and sometimes she did not say words correctly.

My sister was bragging that her son, age 4, could count to 20. My son, who was the same age was not interested in counting at all.

My niece seemed to like to eat everything. My daughter was the right height and weight for her age , but was very 'picky' about what she ate.

Shortly after my son turned four, he started having 'accidents' in the middle of the night and he wanted to sleep in my bedroom.

As our children grow, we ask ourselves whether or not our children are doing what they are supposed to be doing. Friends and relatives sometimes give us advice. Knowing when to be concerned and when things are just "typical" is not easy. It is important to have a general idea of typical development and development which is not typical so that we can seek help when we need to and not pay too much attention to other things which are simply "normal."

The five stages presented in this section show some of the abilities that children could reach during their preschool years. These are general characteristics listed at the stage they usually occur. Since all children develop in their own time they may be in two stages at once. Some of their behavior may be ahead or behind of what you think it should be. Use the guidelines to help you be familiar with what happens during a particular developmental stage. Remember that learning is a step by step process. Each step builds upon the one before.

Five stages of early development:

- Depending on others
- Exploring
- I can do it myself
- I think I am all grown up
- I know I am all grown up

Depending on others

Skills developed during this stage are the basis for all later development.

- responds to name and turns head toward sounds
- makes eye contact and follows a moving person or objects with eyes
- makes sounds, smiles and laughs
- begins to imitate sounds and "chatters"
- begins to point to common objects and body parts
- reaches, explores, bangs, holds and shakes objects with hands
- puts objects in mouth
- begins to feed herself "finger" foods
- sits, crawls and begins to walk alone
- repeats actions that have interesting results like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake
- begins to look for hidden objects
- "plays" alone for short periods of time
- prefers to be with people she knows well
- naps often (hopefully!)

Exploring

This is the time when children do not need "big" people to do everything and they want to make sure we know they can do things for themselves.

- uses single words or gestures to let others know what he wants
- can follow simple directions
- understands more than he can say
- understands and says "no"
- feeds himself with fingers, spoon and cup
- can remove some of his own clothing
- gets into everything and likes to make things happen
- very active - runs, climbs, pushes, pulls and pounds
- likes to know what is happening (routines)
- plays beside or watches other children his own age playing
- defends things that he thinks belong to him (sometimes we think he is being selfish)
- will join simple group activities for short periods of time

I can do it myself

During this time children practice and improve skills they learned earlier which makes this a time of many changes.

- uses one - three word sentences to request or demand something
- knows the names of most common objects and actions
- begins to use "describing" words such as the size, shape or color of objects
- can help dress and undress herself
- begins to use the potty
- uses silverware and cup by herself, but still makes a mess sometimes
- runs, jumps, climbs, throws, catches, rides tricycle
- likes to be a helper and seeks adult approval and attention
- seems more "grown-up" at times and like a "baby" at other times
- uses her imagination which sometimes means she might be afraid of the dark or animals
- begins to understand ideas about time such as today, tomorrow and yesterday
- begins to play with other children and takes turns with some help
- generally cooperates when she is asked to do something by an adult
- will stay with some activities for a longer time, especially if it is something she likes to do
- typically moves from one activity to another

I think I am all grown up

- asks questions and more questions and more questions
- uses simple sentences
- takes care of eating, dressing and bathroom routines with little help
- balance and coordination increase and can be seen in skills like hopping and skipping
- begins to draw simple pictures
- recognizes things that are the same and different
- begins to pay attention to things that go together like socks, pants and shirts are all clothing
- more aware of how other people are feeling
- may "give up" nap
- can wait for a short time and take turns
- likes to pretend and may have an imaginary friend
- enjoys playing with other children and may have special friends
- likes to take some responsibility like running errands

I know I am all grown up

- uses full sentences
- conversations include: telling stories, talking about things that have/will happen and some humor (Beware of the "knock-knock" jokes)
- can follow directions that include several steps
- can remember things about stories that have been read and past experiences
- uses pencil, scissors, paints with purpose and meaning
- has a longer attention span
- sorts objects by size, shape, color or function
- begins to count and show an interest in numbers and letters
- play with other children may include simple table games, competitive games and imitating "life" situations like house, school, doctor, post office, super heros, etc.

Common household items to help your child learn and grow

Play is a very important part of our child's development. Toys are not the only things children use to play and learn. Common things found in the house provide children with chances to count, match, sort, compare, create and learn about colors, sounds, sizes, shapes and textures. When we encourage, respond to and provide chances for our children to use common household items, we are supporting learning and growth with items that are familiar to our child.

The Perfect Toy

I spent alot of time searching for the perfect toy. After Craig tore off the paper and looked at the toy, I was disappointed that he was more interested in the box than the toy.

Kirsten's toys were arranged on the wonderful toy shelf in her room. Much to my surprise, she was more interested in playing with the pots and pans in the kitchen than the perfect toys on her toy shelf.

Below is a list of common household items and some of the ways that learning and growth can be encouraged. Use your imagination and think of more!

- Pots, pans, lids, pie tins and silverware can be used to explore sounds, sizes, matching and using hand and finger muscles.
- Measuring spoons, cups and bowls can be used for matching, stacking, pouring and finding out how much will go in a space.
- Cans, plastic bottles, paper towels and toilet paper rolls can be used for rolling, pushing, comparing sizes and "art" projects.
- Muffin tins and egg cartons can be used for sorting and counting.
- Cookie cutters can be used with playdough for tracing and making puzzles.
- Oatmeal, jello and cereal boxes can be used for filling, emptying, stacking, in/out and playing "grocery."
- Large appliance boxes can be used to play hide and seek, make a playhouse, store, post office or play train.
- Sponges give children a chance to use their hand and finger muscles for wiping, wringing, squeezing, etc.
- An egg beater or hand mixer gives children a chance to practice fine muscle skills.
- Food is one way for children to learn more about colors, shapes, tastes, sizes and textures.
- Mirrors give children a chance to find out more about themselves such as body parts, making faces and are fun for playing peek-a-boo.
- Clothing, like mirrors, gives children a way of finding out about themselves, plus they can practice how to do things for themselves. The best part: they can play "grown-up."
- Scraps of material can be used to learn about textures and colors and practice cutting and pasting skills
- Thread, spools, yarn and shoestrings are great for creating beautiful art as well as giving children a chance to practice sorting, stacking and matching.
- Magazines, catalogs and store ads give children a chance to cut, paste, find things that go together or make a "picture shopping list."
- Old envelopes can be used to play "post office." They can also be used for sorting by size and/or color.
- Hardware, such as nuts, bolts and tools, gives children a chance to feel grown-up. At the same time, they can practice hand and finger skills by using their hands and eyes together. (Having an adult present is a good idea!)
- Sand, water, rice oatmeal and shaving cream are just plain fun and promote development in many ways.

National Organizations

NICHCY
National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, D.C. 20013
1-800-999-5599

NORD
National Organization for Rare Disorders
P.O. Box 8923
100 Rt. 37
New Fairfield, CT 06812-8923
(203) 746-6518 or 1-800-999-6673

NORD acts as a clearinghouse for information about rare disorders and networks families with similar disorders together for mutual support.

STOMP
Specialized Training of Military Parents
Georgia/ARC
1851 Ram Runwasy. Suite 104
College Park, GA 30337
(404) 767-2258

Specialized Training of Military Parents
122208 Pacific Highway, SW
Tacoma, WA 98499
(206) 588-1741

STOMP provides information and training to military families with children who have special education needs. The project assists parents in networking within the military and civilian community.

National Hotlines

American Council for the Blind 1-800-424-8666
American Foundation for the Blind 1-800-232-5463
American Society for Deaf Children 1-800-942-2732
The ARC
(National Organization on Mental Retardation) ... 1-800-433-5255
Cleft Palate Foundation 1-800-242-5338
Cornelia de Lange Syndrome Foundation 1-800-223-8355
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation 1-800-344-4823
DIRS
(Disability Information & Referral Service) 1-800-255-3477
Epilepsy Foundation of America 1-800-332-1000
National Association
for Hearing and Speech Action 1-800-638-talk

National Association for
Parents of Visally Impaired 1-800-562-6265
National Association for
Sickle Cell Disease 1-800-421-8453
National Down Syndrome Congress 1-800-232-6372
National Down Syndrome Society 1-800-221-4602
National Easter Seal Society 1-800-221-6827
National Fragile X Foundation 1-800-688-8765
National Head Injury Foundation 1-800-444-nhif
PEAK
(Parent Education & Assistance for Kids) 1-800-284-0251
Spina Bifida Association of America 1-800-621-3141
United Cerebral Palsy 1-800-usa-lucp

State Agencies

Ohio Department of Education
Division of Early Childhood Education
65 South Front Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4183
(614) 466-0224

Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
30 East Broad Street
12th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 466-5214

Ohio Department of Education
The Division of Special Education
933 High Street
Worthington, Ohio 43085
(614) 466-2650

Ohio Resource Center for Low Incidence Handicapped Students
470 Glenmont Avenue
Columbus,Ohio 43214
(614) 262-6131

Department of Mental Health
30 East Broad Street
14th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 466-2596

Ohio Department of Health
P.O. Box 118, 246 N. High St.
Columbus, Ohio 43266-0118
(614) 644-8389

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Ohio Department of
Human Services
30 East Broad St.
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 466-6747

Federally Funded Parent Organizations

Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities
(OCECD)
Bank One Building
165 W. Center Street, Suite 302
Marion, Ohio 43302-3741
(614) 382-5452 or 1-800-374-2806 (parents only)
OCECD provides information, training and assistance to parents of children with disabilities throughout Ohio. OCEDC has a network of Family Resource Centers, located throughtout Ohio, that provide free support, training and information services to Ohio's families of children with special needs.
Contact: the central office for the Family Resource Center in your region.

Child Advocacy Center
1821 Summit Rd. Suite 303
Cincinnati, Ohio 45237
(503) 821-2400

The Child Advocacy Center provides information, training and assistance to parents of children with disabilities who live in Southwestern Ohio.

State Projects

FAMILY INFORMATION NETWORK

A statewide parent-to-parent network that provides information, support and education for families of infants and young children who have developmental delays or disabilities.

Contact: The Family Information Network at the Ohio Department of Health for the FIN Consultant in your region.

PARENT MENTOR PROJECT

A project supported by the Ohio Department of Education in which selected school districts have a parent(s) available to serve as a liasion between families and the schools

Contact: The Ohio Department of Education or your local SERRC for the Parent Mentors in your region.

Regional - a list of SERRC's and the counties that they service

Central Ohio SERRC
470 Glenmont Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43214
(614) 262-4545
Delaware - Fairfield - Franklin
Licking - Madison - Pickaway
Union

Cuyahoga SERRC
14605 Granger Road
Maple Heights, Ohio 44137
(216) 587-5960
Cuyahoga

East Central Ohio SERRC
248 Front Ave., S.W.
New Philadelphia, Ohio 44663
(216) 343-3355
Belmont - Carroll - Coshocton
Guernsey - Harrison - Holmes
Jefferson - Muskingum - Noble
Tuscarawas

East Shore SERRC
7900 Euclid-Chardon Road
Kirtland, Ohio 44094
(216) 256-8483
Geauga - Lake

Hopewell SERRC
5799 West New Market Rd.
Hillsboro, Ohio 45133
(513) 393-1904
Adams - Brown - Clinton
Fayette - Highland

Lincolnway SERRC
1450 West Main Street
Louisville, Ohio 44641
(216) 875-2423
Columbiana - Stark - Wayne

Miami Valley SERRC
1831 Harshman Road
Dayton, Ohio 45424
(513) 236-9965
Clark - Darke - Greene - Miami
Montgomery - Preble

Mid-Eastern Ohio SERRC
420 Washington Ave. #100
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio
44221
(216) 929-6634
Medina - Portage - Summit

North Central Ohio SERRC
2200 Bedford Avenue
Mansfield, Ohio 44906
(419) 747-4808
Ashland - Crawford - Knox - Marion
Morrow - Richland - Wyandot

North East Ohio SERRC
409 Harmon Street, N.W.
Warren, Ohio 44483
(216) 394-0310
Ashtabula - Mahoning - Trumbull

Northern Ohio SERRC
218 North Pleasant Street
Oberlin, Ohio 44074
(216) 775-2786
Erie - Huron - Lorain

Northwest Ohio SERRC
10142 Dowling Road, RR2
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402
(419) 833-6771
Defiance - Fulton - Hancock - Henry
Lucas - Ottawa - Paulding - Putnam
Sandusky - Seneca - Van Wert
Williams - Wood

Pilasco-Ross SERRC
411 Court Street
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662
(614) 354-4526
Lawrence - Pike - Ross - Scioto

Southeastern Ohio SERRC
507 Richland Avenue
Athens, Ohio 45701
(614) 594-4235
Athens - Gallia - Hocking - Jackson
Meigs - Monroe - Morgan - Perry
Vinton - Washington

Southwestern Ohio SERRC
1301 Bonnell St., 3rd floor
Cincinnati, Ohio 45215
(513) 563-0354
Butler - Clermont - Hamilton
Warren

West Central Ohio SERRC
616 North Dixie Highway
Wapakoneta, Ohio 45895
(419) 738-9224
Allen - Auglaize - Champaign
Hardin - Logan - Mercer - Shelby

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